

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A fastener assembly comprising:
a fastening element; and
a fastener comprising:
a base;
a housing connected to the base, the housing adapted to retain the fastening element when the fastening element is inserted in the housing; and
a depressible latch connected to the base external to the housing and positioned relative to the housing to retain the fastening element by interference with a lateral surface of the fastening element, the depressible latch including a surface that is proximate an opening in the housing and is externally accessible with the fastening element retained in the housing, the depressible latch configured such that the fastening element is inhibited from being removed from the housing absent an application of a force applied to the surface proximate the opening to depress the depressible latch.
2. (Currently Amended) The fastener of claim 1, wherein the base includes further ~~including~~ a flange and wherein the housing and the depressible latch are both connected to the flange.
3. (Original) The fastener of claim 2, wherein the flange is configured so that it can be connected to a sheet of material.
4. (Original) The fastener of claim 3, wherein each of the flange and sheet of material comprise a thermoplastic and the flange and sheet of material are heat sealed together.

5. (Original) The fastener of claim 1, wherein the housing comprises a side wall and a retaining lip.
6. (Original) The fastener of claim 5, wherein the retaining lip comprises a notch to accommodate a fastening element attachment mechanism.
7. (Original) The fastener of claim 5, wherein the side wall comprises a semi-circular section.
8. (Canceled)
9. (Previously Presented) The fastener of claim 1, wherein the depressible latch is flexible.
10. (Previously Presented) The fastener of claim 1, wherein the depressible latch comprises a flange generally parallel to a base of the housing and projecting towards the interior of the housing.
11. (Previously Presented) The fastener of claim 1, wherein the depressible latch comprises a portion corresponding to the shape of the fastening element.
12. (Original) The fastener of claim 1, wherein the fastener is formed in a sheet of material.
13. (Currently Amended) A fastener assembly, comprising:
a fastening element; and
a fastener comprising:
 a base;
 a housing connected to the base, the housing sized and adapted to retain the fastening element; and

a depressible latch connected to the base external to the housing and positioned relative to the housing so that the depressible latch in combination with the housing retains the fastening element, the depressible latch including a surface that is proximate an opening in the housing and is externally accessible with the fastening element retained in the housing, the depressible latch configured such that the fastening element is inhibited from being removed from the housing absent an application of a force applied to the surface proximate the opening to depress the latch.

14. (Previously Presented) The fastener assembly of claim 13, wherein the fastening element is flexible.

15. (Previously Presented) The fastener assembly of claim 13, wherein the housing is flexible.

16 -17.(Canceled)

18. (Currently Amended) A fastener that can be attached to a first surface, comprising:
a base;

a housing connected to the base, the housing comprising a retaining lip having a second surface, at least a portion of the second surface being substantially parallel to the first surface, the housing being sized and adapted to retain a fastening element; and

a latch connected to the base external to the housing, the latch positioned relative to the housing that in combination with the housing retains the fastening element, wherein the latch comprises a first portion to which pressure is applied when the fastening element is moved into engagement with the fastener and a second portion comprising a third surface disposed intermediate the first surface and the second surface upon which the fastening element rests when in an engaged position, at least a portion of the third surface being substantially parallel to the first surface.

19. (Currently Amended) The fastener of claim 18, ~~further including wherein the base~~ includes a flange and wherein the housing and the latch are both connected to the flange.
20. (Previously Presented) The fastener of claim 19, wherein the flange is configured so that it can be connected to a sheet of material.
21. (Previously Presented) The fastener of claim 20, wherein each of the flange and the sheet of material comprise a thermoplastic, and wherein the flange and the sheet of material are configured to be heat sealed together.
22. (Previously Presented) The fastener of claim 18, wherein the housing comprises a side wall and a retaining lip.
23. (Previously Presented) The fastener of claim 22, wherein the retaining lip comprises a notch to accommodate a fastening element attachment mechanism.
24. (Previously Presented) The fastener of claim 22, wherein the side wall comprises a semi-circular section.
25. (Previously Presented) The fastener of claim 18, wherein the housing is flexible.
26. (Previously Presented) The fastener of claim 18, wherein the latch is flexible.
27. (Currently Amended) The fastener of claim 18, wherein the latch comprises a flange generally parallel to ~~at the base of the housing~~, the latch projecting towards ~~the an~~ the interior of the housing.
28. (Currently Amended) The fastener assembly of claim 13, ~~further including wherein the~~ base includes a flange connected to both the housing and the depressible latch, and wherein the flange is made of thermoplastic.

29. (Currently Amended) The fastener assembly of claim 13, ~~further including wherein the~~ base includes a flange connected to both the housing and the depressible latch, and wherein the flange and an inflatable bladder are heat sealed together.

30. (Previously Presented) The fastener assembly of claim 13, wherein the housing comprises a side wall and a retaining lip.

31. (Previously Presented) The fastener assembly of claim 30, wherein the retaining lip comprises a notch to accommodate a fastening element attachment mechanism.

32. (Previously Presented) The fastener assembly of claim 30, wherein the side wall comprises a semi-circular section.

33. (Previously Presented) The fastener assembly of claim 13, wherein the depressible latch comprises a portion corresponding to a shape of the fastening element.

34. (Previously Presented) The fastener assembly of claim 13, wherein the depressible latch is positioned relative to the housing to retain the fastening element by interference with a lateral surface of the fastening element.

35-54. (Canceled)

55. (Previously Presented) The fastener of claim 1, wherein the fastener is attached to an object and the depressible latch is depressible in the direction of the object.

56-61. (Canceled)

62. (Currently Amended) A fastener assembly comprising:
a fastening element; and

a fastener comprising:

a base;

a depressible latch connected to the base; and

a housing connected to the base, the housing adapted to retain the fastening element so that a surface of the depressible latch located proximate an opening in the housing is externally accessible with the fastening element retained in the housing such that a force can be applied to the surface to depress the latch,

wherein the depressible latch is connected to the base external to the housing, and wherein the depressible latch is positioned relative to the housing to retain the fastening element by interference with a lateral surface of the fastening element.

63. (Currently Amended) The fastener of claim 62, ~~further including wherein the base~~ includes a flange and wherein the housing and the depressible latch are both connected to the flange.

64. (Previously Presented) The fastener of claim 63, wherein the flange is configured so that it can be connected to a sheet of material.

65. (Previously Presented) The fastener of claim 64, wherein each of the flange and sheet of material comprise a corresponding thermoplastic and the flange and sheet of material are sealed together.

66. (Previously Presented) The fastener of claim 62, wherein the housing comprises a side wall and a retaining lip.

67. (Previously Presented) The fastener of claim 66, wherein the retaining lip comprises a notch to accommodate a fastening element attachment mechanism.

68. (Previously Presented) The fastener of claim 66, wherein the side wall comprises a semi-circular section.

69. (Previously Presented) The fastener of claim 62, wherein the latch is flexible.

70. (Currently Amended) The fastener of claim 62, wherein the latch comprises a flange generally parallel to ~~the~~a base of the housing and projecting towards ~~the~~an interior of the housing.

71. (Previously Presented) The fastener of claim 62, wherein the latch comprises a portion corresponding to the shape of the fastening element.

72. (Previously Presented) The fastener of claim 62, wherein the fastener is formed in a sheet of material.

73. (Previously Presented) The fastener of claim 62, wherein the housing is configured such that the depressible latch is accessible such that an external force can be applied by an operator's finger to depress the latch.

74. (Previously Presented) The fastener assembly of 13, wherein at least one of the fastening element and the fastener is coupled to an inflatable bladder to provide an inflatable device.